

From: Representative Mary Belk [mary.belk@ncleg.net]
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To: Governor's Press Office [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=user2e80ee90]
Subject: [External] Greetings from Raleigh - November 28, 2017

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Bi-weekly newsletter from the office of Representative Mary Belk.

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Happy Thanksgiving from my family to yours!

Update on New District Proposals

The past two weeks have seen another big development in the [Covington v.](#)

[North Carolina](#) racial gerrymandering case. Nathaniel Persily, the Special Master appointed by the court to correct unconstitutional districts in the 2017 plan, filed his first draft of proposed maps. You can find the official filing with a text description of the changes he is suggesting [HERE](#), and see larger versions of the maps [HERE](#).

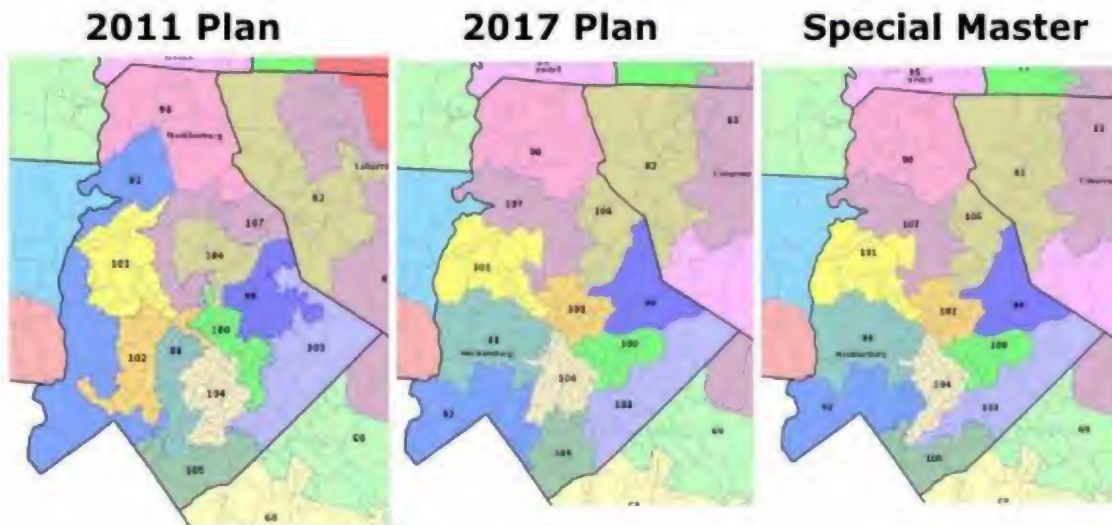
We have not yet been provided with official demographic or voter registration information for the proposed districts, so I do not want to provide any half-baked analysis. I will say that the Special Master's plan seems to be an attempt to respect the legislature's 2017 plan while also making some fairly drastic changes in a couple of spots to fix unconstitutional issues recognized by the courts. Based on the Court's order, he could have changed any of the districts in Mecklenburg County, except District 105, which must keep its 2011 shape. In his draft plan, he only revised the three districts immediately bordering District 105, leaving the rest of the 2017 districts unchanged. Besides State Senate District 19 in Cumberland County, which looks more competitive with the addition of downtown Fayetteville, I am not seeing any large partisan differences between the draft plan and the 2017 districts.

One thing that is easy to see is that these draft maps were purposely drawn without considering the home addresses of current legislators, so there are a few legislators who are now "double-bunked" in this draft proposal. However, the court had ruled that the final proposal can consider incumbency as long as it does not interfere with other aspects of the plan. Representatives Cynthia Ball and Grier Martin from Wake County have been placed in the same district, but by swapping a few precincts of similar population demographics, they could continue to run for separate seats in 2018. Guilford County House and Senate members from both parties are in similar situations, so expect some changes to the draft plan. We will definitely have answers to these questions before December 1st, the court's deadline.

District 88 looks like it will avoid any further changes in this round of redistricting, so I'm going to continue to introduce myself to new voters and serve the constituents who were good enough to send me to Raleigh. Once the final plan has been approved by the Court, I'll put together a full update,

including the new Guilford County maps, because there are a few ways they could try to resolve their double-bunking issues there.

Please stay tuned to my official Twitter ([@BelkRep](#)) feed for updates and announcements.



The Special Master's proposal is not remarkably different from the 2017 plan in Mecklenburg County.

Sometimes I Hate Being Right

Not long ago, there was an effort in Washington to 'Repeal & Replace' the Affordable Care Act that would have dramatically cut Medicaid funding to North Carolina and allowed insurance companies to go back to charging North Carolinians for high premiums, in return for substandard coverage and medical care. Due to the efforts of activists from across the nation, that effort failed, but I worried that it could be revived at any time. It looks like that time has already come.

The questionable ["tax cut" bill](#) currently under consideration in the U.S. Senate includes language that would repeal the individual mandate to purchase health insurance. This is less 'Repeal and Replace,' and more 'Smash and Grab.' In

order to pay for a permanent corporate tax cut and a temporary income tax cut, the Senate plan 'saves' money by repealing the individual mandate. [According to the non-partisan CBO](#), this action would cause massive destabilization in state insurance markets, raising premiums an average of 10% per year (that's 250% in 10 years), and pushing 13 million people off the insurance rolls over 10 years.

The Affordable Care Act requires insurance companies to sell plans for more or less the same rates to the same populations of people, regardless of their health or pre-existing conditions. If people are not required to have health insurance, they can choose to not pay for a policy until they are sick or in need of medical care. Insurance companies will still be required to offer the insurance, so to pay for more sick people, they will be forced to raise rates on all of their customers. This is in addition to recent steep premium increases, a direct result of the Trump Administration's executive order that halted payments by the federal government for its cost-sharing obligations.

Our Senators, Richard Burr and Thom Tillis, are supporting this new plan to wreck the insurance markets. I hope you will take the time over the next week to contact them and let them know they are making a big mistake.

Senator	Thom	Tillis
185 Dirksen	Senate Office	Building
Washington,	DC	20510
Email		Link
Phone:	(202)	224-6342
Fax:	(202)	228-2563

Senator	Richard	Burr
217 Russell	Senate Office	Building
Washington,	DC	20510
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Phone:	(202)	224-3154
Fax:	(202)	228-2981



Cecile Richards of Planned Parenthood, Rep. Laura Hall of Alabama, and Lindsey Robinson from Planned Parenthood NC; just a few of the amazing women I met in Washington.

Planned Parenthood Legislative Conference

Recently, I spent two days in Washington D.C. at a legislative summit hosted by Planned Parenthood and their affiliates. My fellow legislators and I came away with a new appreciation for the breadth of services offered by our only truly nationwide health care provider and respect for the patients who shared their personal stories. Especially moving was the US military veteran who attributed the successful treatment of her breast cancer to the diagnosis and high quality medical care she obtained through her local planned parenthood clinic.

Many people don't realize that Planned Parenthood spends over 85% of its budget on providing regular gynecological, prenatal, and neonatal care, including regular cancer and sexually transmitted disease screenings. Most of the people who use these services do not otherwise have access to health care, either because they lack insurance or there are no other easily accessible women's health care providers in their areas. In a time when many rural clinics and hospitals are being shuttered to save costs, Planned Parenthood can be held up as a model of how to economically and compassionately provide care to underserved populations.

One major focus of the conference was how Planned Parenthood can partner with other social justice organizations to reach underserved populations and maintain funding for their critical medical services in a time of budget scarcity and political uncertainty. Partnerships with the ACLU and LaRaza have provided avenues to speak to immigrant communities and pass along the message that good family health starts with good women's health care. The national presence and experience of Planned Parenthood give them the knowledge to reach and serve these communities efficiently and compassionately.

Here in North Carolina, Medicaid expansion would be a big first step in turning around the decline in rural hospitals and clinics. Eventually, I'd like to see evidence-based strategies, like expanding access to birth control and comprehensive sex education, put into practice in North Carolina. States like Colorado have shown that when you expand access and education around women's health, you see improvement across a broad range of statistical measures like the teen birth rate, average birth weight, and even improvement in education outcomes for children who receive comprehensive neonatal care.

I believe it's long past time when we should consider the full range of family planning care and education as part and parcel with other health care services, like heart surgery and flu shots. Then we can have honest discussions about access to care and funding for every patient in need.



Thank you to the Union County Democrats for welcoming me with such enthusiasm and commitment to organize for victory in 2018!

Your City, Our Community

The holiday season is a time of family, friends, and cheer for many of us, but it can also be a time of loneliness, regret, and despair for people who are suffering from mental health or substance use disorders. It's a terrible irony that the time we are called to come together can highlight the distance people feel from society and their loved ones, causing their conditions to deteriorate.

If you or one of your loved ones are struggling this holiday season, there are resources available to help.

1. **24 Hour NAMI Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** (800) 273-TALK
2. **NAMA Mental Health & Substance Use Information:** (800) 950-NAMI (Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.- 6 p.m., EST)
3. **Local Rehabilitation Centers:** <http://www.freerehabcenters.org/city/nc-charlotte>

Open Enrollment ends December 15th! Visit [HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) to update your

financial information and choose your plan. If you are signing up for the first time, or need help making your decision, visit www.getcoveredamerica.org/connector to find local organizations who offer one-on-one appointments to help people get covered.

Charlotte 311 is your connection to city services, including Animal Control, Street Maintenance, Bulky Trash Pick-up, Parking Enforcement, and all other non-police related matters. Dial 311 or [visit their website](#) to fill out a form and have your issue addressed as soon as possible.

Don't forget! Visit NCCash.com today to see if you have unclaimed property under the supervision of the NC Treasurer's office.

My office is here to help you navigate any issues you may have with state services. Please call myself or my legislative assistant, Ralph Belk, at 919-733-5607 or email me at mary.belk@ncleg.net with any questions or concerns

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starting November 1.



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Visit GetAmericaCovered.org to help spread the word about ACA Open Enrollment.

In the News

[If you want a real tree this Christmas, get it early. Here's why they may not last.](#)

Charlotte Observer

[NC taking over embattled mental health agency Cardinal Innovations](#)

Charlotte Observer

[Editorial: N.C. passing up \\$13 billion for health care over next decade](#)

Capital Broadcasting Company

[Editorial: Message from Va. to NC – expand Medicaid](#)

The News & Observer

[Our View: Two-year judicial terms a terrible idea](#)

Rocky Mount Telegram

[North Carolina's Attacks on the Courts Lead to Fewer Judges of Color](#)

Americanprogress.org

[Our View: Keep politics out of court redistricting](#)

The Fayetteville Observer

[Early Education Is a Game Changer: New Report Shows That Reaching Infants and Toddlers Reduces Special Education Placement, Leads to Soaring Graduation Rates](#)

The74million.org

[Stanford professor draws maps to correct NC gerrymanders. Now he wants feedback.](#)

News & Observer

[Nonprofit provides TV studio for Lt. Gov. Forest's office](#)

WRAL

[Atlantic Coast Pipeline set to seize private property for 600-mile project](#)

The News & Observer

[Troops return from Puerto Rico deployment](#)

The Fayetteville Observer

[Governor announces studies into Neuse, Tar, Cashie and Lumber rivers](#)

Kinston.com

[Governor stops in Fayetteville, announces program to combat opioid epidemic](#)

The Fayetteville Observer

[Senate tax bill cuts taxes of wealthy and hikes taxes on families earning under \\$75,000 over a decade](#)

Washington Post

[Editorial: Stop jailing people for being poor](#)

Charlotte Observer

[13% of NC households would face a tax increase under Senate GOP tax plan](#)

NC Budget and Tax Center

[Federal court officially appoints special master over legislative objections in racial gerrymandering case](#)

The Progressive Pulse

[Opinion: NC Republicans are worried about the man who might redraw our voting map. They should be](#)

Charlotte Observer

[In North Carolina, Republicans Stung by Court Rulings Aim to Change the Judges](#)

NY Times

[Editorial: Legislators to judges: You better watch your back](#)

Charlotte Observer

[Is NC lawmakers' proposal a threat to judges who won't go along with their agenda?](#)

The News & Observer

[Editorial: Cooper, legislative leaders must cooperate for better pay, staffing and security for prisons](#)

Capital Broadcasting Company

[Researchers get \\$275k grant for GenX health study](#)

Star-News

[N Carolina legislators begin school funding formula rewrite](#)

Associated Press

[Cooper says review of prison security on fast track](#)

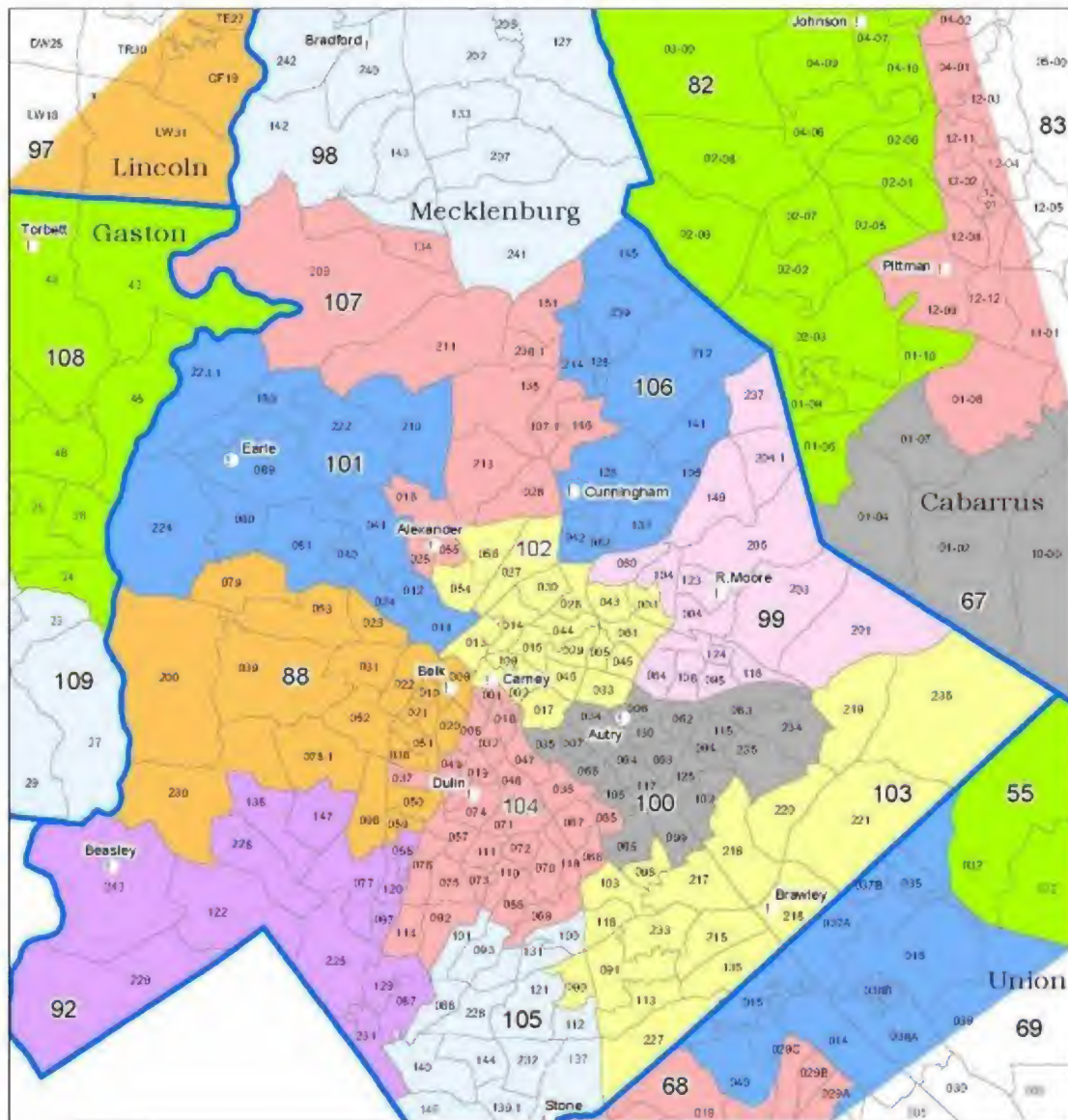
WRAL

[Commission OKs 56 ways to curb opioid crisis. Cooper asks: Who will follow through?](#)

The News & Observer

New Mecklenburg House Districts

Effective 8/30/17



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You are receiving this newsletter because you contacted the Office of Representative Mary Belk or requested updates on her activities in District 88.

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